



MAYOR BYRON W. BROWN

State of the CITY

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MAYOR BYRON W. BROWN DELIVERS HIS FOURTEENTH STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

In the first year of this new decade, Mayor Brown called on business, educational and civic leaders to work harder than ever before to accelerate a shared vision for the City of Buffalo as it rapidly develops into a City of Innovation and Inclusion

Buffalo, NY – Mayor Byron W. Brown today delivered his 14th “State of the City” Address at the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center, announcing that the State of the City of Buffalo is strong, and getting stronger. Mayor Brown called on leaders in the business, education and non-profit sectors to work together as a catalyst to achieve a shared of Buffalo’s future.

Mayor Brown stated, “Our future is in focus, and our vision is clear, optimistic and unwavering. The City of Buffalo is rapidly developing as a City of Innovation and Inclusion. 2020, the third decade of the 21st century, will be our most important year yet. We will manifest an exciting vision for the future of our city. It must be a shared vision that we all embrace and execute with passion and shared purpose.”

He continued, “Our ‘Roaring 20’s’ will re-imagine the same spirit of industry, innovation and achievement that defined our City a century ago, but with a shared vision that we embrace and execute with passion and purpose. We must innovate our approach to economic development and job creation and skills training. We must focus on efficiency, data and analytics, digital connectivity and building an Intelligent Smart City. We will build a citizen-centric foundation that creates insights early, ensures knowledge transfer and unleashes our creative potential.”

MAYOR BROWN UNVEILED THE FOLLOWING HIGHLIGHTS AND INITIATIVES AS PART OF HIS 2020 AGENDA.

Buffalo is poised to become a “City of Innovation”

Mayor Brown presented an innovative approach to economic development and job creation that will rely on a built knowledge transfer pipeline and talent development hub. This new strategy is being driven by the City’s aggressive efforts to compete in the global race for talent, while also ensuring a diverse, equitable and inclusive workforce.

- Mayor Brown unveiled a dynamic new initiative, Buffalo’s Race for Place, which will engage emerging workforce talent and determine the assets and offerings needed to foster the Mayor’s “City of Innovation.” The initiative will foster dynamic public-private partnerships—like the commitment of jobs and investment by Doug Jemal, Founder and President of Douglas Development, and M&T Bank Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Rene Jones—that are critical to fostering the next wave of growth.

- o Jemal is forgoing substantial tax benefits worth millions of dollars for the Seneca One Tower project in order to advance infrastructure improvements critical to attracting new businesses and workers to the City. Instead, he has agreed to direct full tax payments into the Accelerate Buffalo Fund, which will serve as a \$38 million dollar fund to jumpstart supporting business development and talent attraction. This unique agreement will be introduced to the Buffalo Common Council for its approval in the coming weeks.
- o The Race for Place campaign is being led by the Buffalo Urban Development Corporation, and will identify and seek other public-private partnership opportunities as well, to create critical mass and vibrancy and match the interior enhancements already underway at Downtown locations.
- Mayor Brown announced a goal to create 2,100 units of housing for this new workforce along a Knowledge Corridor stretching from Canalside to the University at Buffalo's South Campus.
 - o Mayor Brown and County Executive Mark Poloncarz will announce a solution for filling this critical housing and employment need.
 - o Developer William Paladino plans to build 100 units of housing and high demand amenities at Saint Paul Mall to attract new residents
 - o Mayor Brown made a commitment to ensure that housing in the City of Buffalo will remain permanently affordable for middle class workers and families.
 - o A \$100 million commitment by the City of Buffalo, over the next five years, to close the racial wealth gap and foster a community of fairness, equity, and justice in the City of Buffalo.
- Mayor Brown highlighted an emerging research and information-based economy in Buffalo, which is being driven by companies like ACV, Campus Labs, Athenex, Flora, Thinking Robot, REAC and Tesla and reinforced his Administration's commitment to building the confidence of this community.
 - o Mayor Brown shared the vision of Main Place Mall owner Patrick Hotung, which has the potential to be one of the largest potential downtown transformations in Buffalo's recent history. He intends to transform the Mall into a state-of-the-art office building that will attract tenants from Buffalo's growing knowledge economy.
 - o To help facilitate this transformation, the Brown Administration will sell the Fernbach Ramp to Main Place Liberty Group for nearly \$20 million dollars, and commit the funds to initiatives that will alleviate transportation burdens on commuters to Downtown Buffalo.

"My Administration's work has built confidence throughout this community. That confidence is leading to the transformation of this City as individuals pursue a new vision for Buffalo," stated Mayor Brown.

ADVANCING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE PERFORMANCE AS A SMART CITY

Mayor Brown highlighted his Administration's data-focused initiatives to make Buffalo "smarter."

- The Brown Administration continues to work with National Grid to complete the purchase of the City's street light system, replacing existing lights with energy-efficient LED lighting equipped with sensors that will generate real-time data related to weather, parking, traffic, and public safety.
- As technology makes our daily lives more informed and connected, the Brown Administration will seek providers for designing, financing, and maintaining the hardware and software that will be utilized for a Smart City build-out. The City's partners must also guarantee that they will work with the Administration to meet its digital inclusion goals and optimize the use of new technology to deliver City services more efficiently.
 - o Mayor Brown's Administration continues to work with Kaleida Health, the University at Buffalo, and all the institutions located on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus to create Buffalo's first Smart Corridor along middle Main Street. These improvements will be funded by an agreement that the City negotiated with Ciminelli Real Estate Corporation.
- Buffalo's Smart Sewer Systems are using sensors that have made it a leader in the field of Green Infrastructure, while also helping manage water and storm flow as well as water conservation goals.
 - o The award-winning Rain Check 2.0 Opportunity Report investigated the six priority basins that will require Green Infrastructure Investments and in the spring, the Buffalo Sewer Authority will fund projects to reduce storm water runoff in a continual effort to make Buffalo more resilient against the negative impacts of global climate change.

- o \$27 million will be invested in water quality capital improvements and complete the largest Environmental Impact Bond in the City's history for Green and Smart Infrastructure
- o Solar panels will be installed at the BSA Bird Island Treatment Facility, helping to offset 85% of the Authority's energy usage.
- Last year, Buffalo Roam App utilization surpassed 50%. Buffalo Roam will become more accessible to visitors when third-party companies are able to integrate their technology with Buffalo Roam in the near future.
- The 311 Buffalo Call and Resolution Center continues to offer residents an effective way of communicating with the City, with over 3 million calls answered since 2006 and Open Data Buffalo remains an important source of information which has garnered nearly 1 million views.
- Mayor Brown announced a unique and innovative public-private partnership in the nation that will accelerate the City's efforts to employ data analytics in its operations. The City will partner with SAS Institute to develop an advanced software suite that will analyze all the data the City gathers and determine trends and other predictive information which can shape City operations and policies. This municipal data and analytics center will be the first of its kind in the nation.
- In its ongoing efforts to become even more inclusive, the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority will issue an Authority-wide Request for Qualifications to seek ideas from prospective development partners for the revitalization of its housing developments.
- The City of Buffalo will host and co-convene the Congress for the New Urbanism's (CNU) weeklong conversation on The Future of Mobility: Remaking Buffalo for the 21st Century; the CNU will release a national publication on the future of mobility and technology in the City of Buffalo this upcoming April.
- Mayor Brown announced his third annual "Civic Innovation Challenge-Powered by AT&T," which will provide another opportunity for the members of Buffalo's tech community to compete for a \$10,000 grand prize by creating a software solution that addresses a challenge City residents are facing.
- In the spirit of being more connected and better informed, Mayor Brown launched BUFFALERT, a new civic alert notification system which will send notifications to enrolled residents via email, text or recorded phone message alerting them to an emergency, public service announcement, event or opportunity of interest. To enroll, text JOIN BUFFALERT TO 3-0-8-9-0.

DEDICATED TO BUFFALO'S STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

- Mayor Brown announced a 43% reduction in overall crime in the City of Buffalo since 2006.
 - o Gun recoveries in 2019 were the most in a decade, with 949 illegal guns were removed from the streets.
 - o A new class of 47 Buffalo police officers were recently sworn in, growing the ranks of the Buffalo Police Department (BPD) to 770 officers.
 - o Mayor Brown recognized the outstanding work of the BPD Neighborhood Engagement Team, Mini Custom Notification program, and the Girls Run the World Youth Empowerment Day which all continue to help transform community policing in neighborhoods Citywide.
 - o The BPD Crisis Intervention Team will hire a social worker, with support from the Endeavor Health Services Police Ride-Along Innovation program and a Mental Health First Aid program is also being developed for City employees and interested community members that will teach them how to respond to signs of mental illness and substance abuse.
- In the last two years, the Buffalo Fire Department added 216 firefighters, filling every one of its 738 positions.
 - o The City is making a \$4.5 million investment in new apparatus in 2020, which includes the procurement of 4 Alternative Response Vehicles.
 - o The Edward M. Cotter Fireboat is being upgraded with new equipment to ensure it remains a viable firefighting resource.
- The City of Buffalo continues to play a role in combatting global climate change by reducing waste, increasing recycling and reuse and focuses on becoming a net zero City.
 - o Buffalo became a certified Climate Smart City in 2019 and is the first city in the US Water Alliance's equity taskforce to release a Water Equity Roadmap.

- o The City's recycling rate climbed to 30% in 2019 with the help of a \$125,000 grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and a \$60,000 grant from Coca Cola.
- o Recycling Reinvented is a multi-unit recycling awareness campaign that is currently underway.
- o Since 2009, the City has distributed more than 20,000 reusable blue tote-bags citywide to residents in every community and neighborhood.
- o In collaboration with the Wilson Foundation, the City has requested \$15 million from Governor Cuomo's 'Restore Mother Nature' program to be allocated for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of portions of the existing seawall at Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park and Erie Basin Marina
- In a continuing effort to protect the public health, safety and welfare of residents, Mayor Brown announced that the City's Replace Old Lead Lines (ROLL) program has replaced more than 200 lead service lines and plans to replace 700 more water service lines with new, lead-free lines in 2020 ensuring that Buffalo's drinking water continues to exceed EPA standards.

RECOGNIZED THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ATHLETICS AND EDUCATION IN GENERATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

- Mayor Brown thanked his colleagues in government and other advocates who stood behind him in his efforts to reverse Section VI's decision regarding Buffalo Public School's ability to participate in regional athletic competition.
- Mayor Brown announced investments that improve and restore neighborhood parks, athletic facilities and community centers including:
 - o Upgrades to six neighborhood parks and five district athletic facilities;
 - o Continued funding for community and senior centers, libraries, and cultural institutions;
 - o A conceptual agreement with Comptroller Barbara Miller-Williams to reimburse the Bisons for the installation of fan safety netting at Sahlen Field for the start of the 2020 season.
- Mayor Brown announced several new education initiatives that will support Buffalo students and improve outcomes:
 - o Harp Data, the Buffalo Public Schools and the Buffalo Public School Board are partnering to increase digital inclusion across the City by making high-speed Internet access available to 5,500 City students through a pilot program serving eight schools;
 - o Announced his intention to nominate Karen Saxon, Choral Director for the Buffalo Public Schools, for the Grammy Award for Music Educator;
 - o Announced a new partnership with Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center that will fully fund and host 100 Mayor's Summer Youth Employment and Internship program positions. This year the program will employ 1,750 young people, bringing the Administration's total investment to more than \$16 million to this program since 2006.
- Mayor Brown recognized the dedicated sponsors of the Police Athletic League of Buffalo program, which served a record number of 11,000 young people in 2019.

ENSURING THE DOORS OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ARE OPEN TO ALL CITY RESIDENTS

- Mayor Brown announced more than \$350 million in investment on Buffalo's East Side, including:
 - o The newly complete Elim Townhomes, a \$10 million investment that transformed a former Brownfield into affordable housing;
 - o Trinity One Apartments, a formerly blighted building on East Delavan that is being transformed into a new \$2.3 million project by Pastor William Gillison at Mt. Olive Development Corporation;
 - o The Forge, a new development on Broadway pioneered by the late Rhonda Ricks, is scheduled for completion later this year;
 - o ECMC's opening of the Russell J. Salvatore Atrium which will serve as the hospital's main entrance.

- The Brown Administration continues to prioritize the inclusion of minority and women owned businesses and minority and female workers in all City sponsored projects and contracts.
 - o New lease agreements with the Olmsted Parks Conservancy and the Buffalo Bisons Baseball organization include community benefit agreements that will enhance diversity of the workforce at some people's favorite destinations.
- Because every person counts the Buffalo Complete Count Commission is working with a variety of partners in the State, county and non-profit sector to ensure that Buffalo's population is accurately counted during the upcoming Census.
- The City of Buffalo Senior Services Division is celebrating 60 years of services this year and will host a number of celebrations and activities for older residents across the City.
- Mayor Brown announced that over 700 donated suits were collected in November during his Suits for Veterans Clothing Drive.
- Mayor Brown recognized the importance of the City's African American heritage to its future economic success by highlighting:
 - o The Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor Archway, a legacy project of Council President Darius Pridgen, that has been supported by the Buffalo Arts Commission and designed by local African American Artist Valeria Cray;
 - o Major infrastructure improvements scheduled for the 509 Michigan Street project;
 - o The Black Achievers Museum on Jefferson Avenue will open on March 20, 2020.
- A campaign for a new \$10 million Hispanic Heritage Cultural Institute, located on Buffalo's West Side at Niagara and Hudson Streets is underway.
- Buffalo's corporate, medical and philanthropic communities continue to step up, with new partners added to our City's TRUST Buffalo initiative, which contributes to a number of important City programs.
- Mayor Brown provided an update on the significant contributions of Buffalo's growing film industry:
 - o A Quiet Place 2 accounted for 13,000 room nights and more than 250 high-paying local hires;
 - o Academy Award Winning Director Guillermo del Toro will return to Buffalo soon to shoot Nightmare Alley with stars Bradley Cooper and Rooney Mara;
 - o Cineposium 2020, a worldwide conference that will bring commissioners from 6 continents to Buffalo for this four-day event;
 - o Mayor Brown congratulated Film Commissioner Tim Clark, who was elected as Board Chair of the Association of Film Commissioners International.

HONORS AND AWARDS

After citing a number of community milestones and anniversaries, Mayor Brown recognized three public servants who have dedicated cumulatively 90 years of service to the City of Buffalo:

- Lovejoy District Council Member Richard Fontana, who was elected in 1997 and served 21 years on the Council;
- Buffalo's longest-serving Common Council Member David A. Franczyk, who retired last year after representing the Fillmore District for 32 years;
- D-District Police Chief Anthony Barba is retiring at the end of the month after 35 years of service.

A heartfelt moment came when Mayor Brown announced that he will rename West Genesee Street between Niagara Square and Franklin Street as Croce Street. Mayor Brown stated, "You can't be Downtown without being reminded of Mark, and he will always be remembered for his immense contributions to our City's resurgence."

Mayor Brown posthumously honored his longtime friend Agnes Bain, the former Executive Director of the African American Cultural Center, with the key to the City of Buffalo. Bain passed away after a brief illness in January. She worked at the cultural center on Masten Avenue for almost 50 years and devoted her life to arts and culture in

the community while also mentoring thousands of children. She was represented by her family and team members from the African American Cultural Center.

Mayor Brown stated, “The Key to the City is our community’s most prestigious award. It honors and recognizes Buffalo citizens who have made profound contributions to our way of life. Agnes was an educator, a leader, a champion of East Side children, who instilled in them the importance of learning, preserving and celebrating our heritage and culture.”

Mayor Brown’s State of the City Address luncheon is a benefit for the Mayor’s Fund to Advance Buffalo, a not-for-profit organization founded in 2006 to improve the quality of life for children and families in the city of Buffalo.

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